

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05 TRSE-00 ICA-11
NSC-05 OES-07 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08 COME-00 DLOS-09 AID-05
HA-05 /119 W

-----032006 190652Z /10

R 181110Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4718
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 14230

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR OTRA PBOR SNAR THE BM
SUBJECT: VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK TO BURMA

REF: RANGOON 1765 (NOTAL), BANGKOK 1311 (NOTAL)
BANGKOK 13989 (NOTAL), BANGKOK 14006 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO THE ASSESSMENT OF AN OFFICIAL WHO
ACCOMPANIED PM KRIANGSAK TO RANGOON, THE THAIS FELT THAT SOME
PROGRESS WAS MADE IN OVERCOMING THE MISTRUSTFUL INERTIA WHICH
HAS CHARACTERIZED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES
FOR MANY YEARS. THE BURMESE WERE "RELATIVELY" MORE RECEPTIVE
AND COMMUNICATIVE. THAIS HOPE THAT FROM THIS ATMOSPHERE
CONCRETE, IF LIMITED, STEPS CAN ENSUE TO IMPROVE THAI-BURMESE
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RELATIONS. FOCUS OF TALKS WAS ON BURMESE REBELS, OF PARAMOUNT
CONCERN TO RANGOON, COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE ON NARCOTICS,
TRADE, AND TREATMENT OF THAI FISHERMEN. END SUMMARY.

1. DCM AND ANDERSON CALLED ON MFA POLITICAL DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR-
GENERAL OWAT ON MAY 18 TO DISCUSS PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK'S
VISIT TO RANGOON . OWAT WAS A MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION.

2. OWAT SAID THAT THE THAI PURPOSE WAS TO TRY TO CONVINCE THE BURMESE OF THE SERIOUS INTENT OF THE KRIANGSAK GOVERNMENT TO ACT ON ANY AGREEMENTS WHICH COULD JOINTLY BE CONCLUDED EITHER DURING THE VISIT OR AFTERWARD. EMBASSY RANGOON HAS ACCURATELY REPORTED THE TENTATIVE NATURE OF ANY AGREEMENTS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN REACHED (REF A). NEVERTHELESS, ACCORDING TO OWAT, THE THAI DELEGATION RETURNED WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN CONVEYING BOTH THAI SERIOUSNESS AND GOOD WILL IN TRYING TO BUDGE BILATERAL RELATIONS FROM THEIR MISTRUSTFUL, NEAR INERT STATE. OWAT CREDITED PM KRIANGSAK, PARTICULARLY, THROUGH HIS STYLE AND OPEN MANNER, WITH STIRRING SOME, ALBEIT LIMITED RESPONSE FROM THE BURMESE. ACCORDING TO OWAT, A CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE WAS CREATED THROUGH THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT NE WIN AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS SAN YU. SUBSEQUENTLY, FORMAL DISCUSSIONS WERE UNDERTAKEN WITH KRIANGSAK'S COUNTERPART, PRIME MINISTER MAUNG MAUNG KHA.

3. IN THE DISCUSSIONS, KRIANGSAK ADDRESSED WHAT THE RTG UNDERSTANDS TO BE THE PRIMARY CONCERN OF RANGOON IN BI-LATERAL RELATIONS-THE QUESTION OF "REBELS" OPERATING IN THE BORDER AREAS. ACCORDING TO OWAT, KRIANGSAK REVIEWED THE RECENT ACTION THE RTG HAS TAKEN TO EXPEL THE "REBELS" OR "DISPLACED PERSONS," AS THE THAIS CALLED THEM, FROM THAI TERRITORY. KRIANGSAK STRESSED THAI COMMITMENT TO DENY THAI TERRITORY TO

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BURMESE INSURGENTS. KRIANGSAK TOLD THE BURMESE THAT ONLY A FEW HUNDRED OUT OF AN ORIGINAL SEVERAL THOUSAND REMAIN IN THAILAND. THE NOTORIOUS LEADER OF THE SHANUNITED ARMY, KHUN SA, KRIANGSAK REPORTED, HAS BEEN OUSTED. ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF UNARMED "DISPLACED PERSONS" WOULD BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN PERMANENTLY IN THAILAND. OWAT SAID THAT KRIANGSAK ASKED WHETHER THE BURMESE WOULD SHOW LENIENCY TOWARD ANY REBELS WHO MIGHT WANT TO SURRENDER. ACCORDING TO OWAT, THE "PROPOSAL DID NOT GET VERY FAR." BOTH SIDES AGREED TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON A CONTINUING BASIS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSIDENTS.

4. ON NARCOTICS, THE THAIS WERE APPRECIATIVE OF BURMESE EFFORTS AND PROPOSED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES TO ATTEMPT TO HALT ILLICIT CULTIVATION, PROCESSING, AND TRAFFICKING. AS REPORTED EARLIER, THE THAIS INFORMED THE BURMESE THAT NO REFINING OF NARCOTICS WAS OCCURRING IN THAILAND, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CHEMICALS USED IN REFINERIES IN BURMA FOUND THEIR WAY TO BURMA THROUGH THAILAND. PM KRIANGSAK BROUGHT UP SUBJECT OF AERIAL PHOTOS. OWAT WAS NOT SURE BUT THOUGHT THAT THE BURMESE LATER INDICATED THEY MIGHT CONSIDER THIS. THAIS PROPOSED INTEL EXCHANGE ON NARCOTICS AND, AS WILL BE DISCUSSED BELOW, A MECHANISM WAS

SUGGESTED.

5. THAI SIDE PROPOSED EXPANDED TRADE ON A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT BASIS AS A DEVICE FOR REDUCING SMUGGLING. BURMESE APPEARED INTERESTED AND APPRECIATIVE OF THIS SUGGESTION. OWAT SAID THAT THE THAI MINISTRY OF COMMERCE WOULD BE THE FOCUL POINT WITHIN THE RTG FOR ELABORATING THIS PROPOSAL, WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE BOARD OF TRADE AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AS WELL AS DIRECTLY WITH PRIVATE FIRMS. A BURMESE TRADE DELEGATION IS EXPECTED TO VISIT BANGKOK SOON TO PURSUE THE ISSUE OF TRADE.

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6. DURING THE DISCUSSIONS OF CONTROL OF BURMESE DISSIDENTS OPERATING FROM THAILAND, NARCOTICS AND SMUGGLING, THE DELEGATIONS EXPLORED MEANS TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND INTEL. THAI CALLED ATTENTION TO THE DORMANT JOINT BORDER COMMISSION. BURMESE APPEARED COMPLETELY NEGATIVE. ON QUESTIONS OF LOCAL CONTACTS AND INTEL EXCHANGES-OWAT SAID THAT CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND GENERAL CHAROEN SUGGESTED STRONGLY THAT INFORMATION BE EXCHANGED ON BORDER ACTIVITIES. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT AT LOCAL LEVELS THERE COULD BE TWO POINTS OF CONTACT. ON CIVIL MATTERS, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

BURMESE "PEOPLE'S COUNCILS" COULD DEAL WITH THAI CIVIL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS. IF MILITARY MATTERS ARE INVOLVED, MILITARY OFFICERS OF BOTH SIDES COULD HAVE CONTACT. IF MATTERS COULD NOT BE HANDLED AT THAT LEVEL, THE ISSUE
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COULD BE REFERRED TO THE MINISTRIES IN BANGKOK AND RANGOON. WHEN QUERIED ON THE QUESTION OF INTEL EXCHANGE ON NARCOTICS, OWAT SAID THAT THERE WAS A DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE CHANNELS TO USE. THE BURMESE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD PRESENT A DRAFT PROPOSAL TO THE THAIS LATER ON APPROPRIATE EXCHANGE ON NARCOTICS AND OTHER ISSUES. OWAT GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT DISCUSSION OF THIS POSSIBLE AGREEMENT WAS DIFFUSE AND TENTATIVE.

7. AS REPORTED EARLIER, THE THAIS, AWARE OF BURMESE DISINTEREST IN JOINT FISHING VENTURES, DID NOT PROPOSE SUCH. DRIANGSAK NOTED SUCH AGREEMENTS THAILAND HAS WITH INDIA AND IS CONCLUDING WITH BANGLADESH, AND SOUGHT BURMESE "LENIENCY" TOWARD THAI FISHERMEN WHO MAY PASS THROUGH THE BURMESE 200 MILE ECONOMIC ZONE. KRIANGSAK ASKED THE BURMESE TO EXPEDITE TRAILS OF THAI FISHERMEN IN BURMESE CUSTODY.

8. FINALLY, KRIANGSAK VINVITTED NE WIN, MAUNG MAUNG KHA AND SAN YU TO VISIT THAILAND. THAIS EXPECT AN EARLY RETURN VISIT BY THE BURMESE AND OWAT PERSONALLY THINKS THAT NE WIN WAS INTRIGUED BY POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT TO BANGKOK.

9. IN SUMMING UP VISIT, OWAT SAID THAT THE THAI SIDE WAS CLEARLY PLEASED. BEFOE DEPARTING FOR RANGOON, HE INDICATED, THAI EXPECTATIONS WERE VERY LIMITED. HOWEVER, BURMESE APPEARED TO APPRECIATE PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK'S OPEN APPROACH AND ANY SUCCESS WAS DUE TO HIS EFFORTS. AS TO "SUBSTANCE" OF THE DISCUSSIONS, OWAT, WHO HAD NOT DEALT WITH THE BURMESE BEFORE, WAS CLEARLY BEMUSEE. HE SAID THAT MOST BURMESE RESPONSES WERE NON-COMMITTAL AT BEST AND THERE WAS LITTLE EXTENDED DIALOGUE ON THE ISSUES. AT THE SAME TIME, OWAT WRYLY NOTED THAT OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PARTY COMMENTED THAT THE BURMESE HAD NEVER BEEN SO FORTHCOMING, AND TALKATIVE. OWAT NOTED THAT THAIS FOUND THE
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BURMESE WERE AT A MINIMUM "RELATIVELY" MORE RESPONSIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE THAN IN THE PAST, AND ALSO INDICATED THAT IN THE PRESENT RELATIVELY IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE THAIS HOPE THAT SOME CONCRETE, IF LIMITED, STEPS CAN ENSUE TO IMPROVE THAI-BURMESE RELATIONS.

WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO14230
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780210-0944
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780547/aaaabnch.tel
Line Count: 225
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 34d8309b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 RANGOON 1765, 78 BANGKOK 1311
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2656456
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK TO BURMA
TAGS: PEPR, OTRA, PBOR, SNAR, TH, BM, (KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/34d8309b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014